### Citizen Bus Tour of the B&B Complex Fire Sisters Ranger District, Deschutes NF Fall 2003

#### Survey Summary February 2004



Shortly after the 100,000 acre B&B Complex Fire was extinguished in October 2003 the Sisters Ranger District organized a community bus tour of affected lands. Over two days, 72 area residents participated in the six-hour tour conducted by the District Ranger and key agency resource specialists. The purpose was to allow citizens to see first-hand the effects of the fire and to discuss concerns and questions with agency personnel. Subsequently, researchers at Oregon State University's Department of Forest Resources conducted a follow up telephone survey with participants to determine their reaction to the tour as well as their perspective on agency management of the fire and future alternatives for restoration.

This preliminary report summarizes the survey responses. Of the 72 tour participants, we were able to reach 50 individuals (many others were out of the area for an extended period) and all 50 agreed to answer the survey.

This research is part of a project funded by the Joint Fire Science Program and the USDA Forest Service, North Central Research Station. For additional information about this survey, contact members of the research team:

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#### **B&B** Complex Fire Citizen Survey

#### 1. How did you hear about the bus tour?

| Forest Service source   | 10% |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Friends of the Metolius | 10% |
| Friend or relative      | 38% |
| Nugget News             | 18% |
| Other                   | 24% |

#### 2. a. How would you rate the tour for being useful/worthwhile:

| Not useful  | 0%  |
|-------------|-----|
| Slightly    | 2%  |
| Moderately  | 4%  |
| Very useful | 92% |

b. Was the information provided easy to understand? **98%** Yes

2% No

c. Was the information credible and trustworthy? 100% Yes 0% No

d. Was the information provided: 98% Fair and well-balanced

2% One-sided

#### 3. What was the best thing about the tour? (Comments have been summarized into thematic categories based on participants' responses)

| Access to back country to see first-hand the size and severity of the fire                          | 40% |
|---|-----|
| Receiving information from experts about what they plan to do with the devastation and restoration. | 32% |
| Keeping the public informed ability to ask managers questions on the spot.                          | 10% |
| Seeing amount of devastation and the mosaic pattern of the fire (areas of little or no damage)      | 10% |
| Great community feeling—Dist. Ranger Bill Anthony and crew do a great job                           | 8%  |

#### 4. Were there any negative aspects of the tour? **4%** Yes 96% No

One person noted, "I enjoyed hearing from the firefighters and biologists, but they were a small part of the discussion. I wanted to hear more from them." Another noted, "They couldn't accommodate everyone who wanted to go on the tour."

#### 5. Has your opinion changed because of your participation on the B&B tour?

| Are you more or less   | More | Less | No Change |
|--|------|------|-----------|
| Knowledgeable about fuel reduction practices?  | 62%  | 0%   | 38%       |
| Supportive of fuel reduction programs?   | 68%  | 0%   | 32%       |
| Knowledgeable of forest restoration strategies   | 78%  | 2%   | 20%       |
| Confident in the ability of the FS to implement an effective fuel reduction program?   | 60%  | 0%   | 40%       |
| Confident that the Forest Service will incorporate citizen concerns into future plans? | 84%  | 0%   | 16%       |

## 6. How did your experience on the tour influence your opinion of the following methods for reducing forest fuels prior to a wildfire:

| Is your opinion of | More acceptable | Less acceptable | Unchanged |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Prescribed fire    | 34%             | 2%              | 64%       |
| Forest thinning    | 56%             | 0%              | 44%       |
| Understory mowing  | 26%             | 4%              | 70%       |

- 7. What grade would you give the Forest Service and the other fire fighting agencies in handling the B&B fire?
  - A **68%**
  - В 22%
  - C 6%
  - D 4%
  - F 0%

## 8. Now that the fire is over, do you agree or disagree the following activities should be carried out on Forest Service lands burned by the fire (except in the wilderness area):

|   | Agree | Disagree | Neutral |
|---|-------|----------|---------|
| Replanting                                  | 90%   | 6%       | 4%      |
| Erosion control                             | 96%   | 0%       | 4%      |
| Harvest and sell what they can              | 78%   | 12%      | 10%     |
| Only remove trees that are a safety concern | 28%   | 66%      | 6%      |
| No intervention, let nature take its course | 6%    | 84%      | 10%     |

9. If you had to make a choice, would you rather the Forest Service now concentrate on reducing fuel in unburned areas or restoring forest land that has already burned?

# 10. What do you think the public's role should be in deciding what happens to the burned areas. (Comments have been summarized into thematic categories based on participants' responses)

| Become informed (public meetings, forums, tours) and then be allowed to make comments and be involved in the decision-making process.  | 54% |
|--|-----|
| Limited involvement, leave final decisions/implementation to experts (keep process from getting caught up in litigation and lawsuits). | 16% |
| Dist. Ranger Bill Anthony and staff are doing a good job and have good working history with public—allow them to continue              | 12% |
| None/minimal, public not educated enough.  | 8%  |
| Minimal, we trust the officials to do the job  | 6%  |
| Other  | 2%  |
| No answer  | 2%  |

## 11. Now that you have been to the site of the B&B fire, how would you personally rate the following concerns regarding future fires:

| Level of concern                    | Great | Moderate | Slight | None |
|-------------------------------------|-------|----------|--------|------|
| Damage to private property          | 34%   | 32%      | 30%    | 4%   |
| Loss of wildlife habitat            | 34%   | 46%      | 20%    | 0%   |
| Economic loss of timber             | 16%   | 36%      | 32%    | 16%  |
| Effects of recreation opportunities | 27%   | 45%      | 22%    | 6%   |
| Damage to visual quality of forests | 34%   | 40%      | 22%    | 4%   |
| Threat to human safety              | 32%   | 42%      | 22%    | 4%   |
| Soil erosion                        | 62%   | 32%      | 6%     | 0%   |

- 12. What is your age? 60 years (mean)
- 13. **Gender: 54%** Male **46%** Female

#### 14. Level of education completed?

| High school  | 8%         | Bachelor's degree | 44% |
|--------------|------------|-------------------|-----|
| Some college | <b>25%</b> | Graduate degree   | 23% |

#### 15. Participant's were asked if they had additional comments.

The overwhelming sentiment was that this tour was an excellent idea... a great form of public involvement and method for a positive ongoing relationship with the community.